

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** ServeMinnesota Action Network

**Application ID:** 13AC146693

**Program Name:** Minnesota Opportunity Corps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- (+) The applicant fully demonstrated the economic disadvantages this targeted community faces with both statewide and national findings on disparities in wages, rates of employment, and education, all of which impact the ability of the target group to gain economic self-sufficiency.
- (+) The applicant succinctly describes the types of problems, particularly social justice issues such as lack of childcare, domestic violence, and mental health. These issues will be addressed in the program design and will impact barriers to employment as described in the report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- (+) Evidence of why this population was chosen is clearly supported by research that indicates education, employment, increased working hours, and assistance with overcoming barriers are effective means for enabling economically disadvantaged individuals to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency.
- (+) The applicant provides a full, detailed description of the varied Member service activities that directly address the identified need of providing employment support. A logical plan is described in which AmeriCorps members will serve in various training, coaching and support capacities designed to increase the jobs skills and employability of the target community.
- (+) AmeriCorps members will be a highly effective means for working with the organization's staff to solve the identified need since they will be expanding the applicant's capacity and capability to work with the target population and add new levels of outreach and support.
- (+) The applicant provided a detailed description of the demonstrable impact that their program will have by providing projections on the number of program recipients that are expected to complete educational programs and be placed in jobs, all of which are strong indicators that the program design will result in greater economic self-sufficiency in the target population.
- (+) The applicant demonstrates clearly how community participants will be assessed by utilizing existing government

program standards such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and multiple best-practice skills assessment tools. Utilizing these tools for this population sets a quality standard of performance that will lend itself to successful case management planning.

(+) The output and outcome measures are in alignment with the required program design and will demonstrate a behavior change impact that is connected both to training received and job acquisition.

(-) The applicant's use of statistics, which included an emphasis on the severity in minority communities, did not fully align with their overall description of an economically disadvantaged target community. The applicant initially gave no data or a description on the racial makeup of the community.